

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE CONSERVATION PRACTICE SPECIFICATION

ANIMAL TRAILS AND WALKWAYS

(FEET)

CODE 575

I. SCOPE

Work shall consist of constructing animal trails and/or walkways to meet the practice purpose at the location(s) and to the lines and grades as shown on the drawings (plans) or as staked in the field.

This practice does not apply to livestock driveways. Driveways are expanded trails used to move livestock from one pasture to another or to handling/shipping facilities. On driveways, livestock are typically not allowed to drift on their own but are driven by riders. Driveways are addressed within the practice standards and specifications for ACCESS ROAD (Code 560).

IIA. ANIMAL TRAILS

The following elements shall govern the construction of animal trails:

- Trails are typically no more than 10 to 12-feet in width.
- Minimum width of trail:
 - Open grassland and sparse or low-growing shrub-grass: 2-feet for livestock and foot trails.
 - Dense brush or trees: 9-feet. When clearing through dense vegetation, a clear, straight, path is most efficient. Cut tree limbs flush with the tree trunk to at least 6-feet above ground. Cut tree stumps as low as possible. Cut brush low, and square the ends to reduce injury to animals.
 - Small vehicles: 6-feet. If full-size vehicles will use trails, follow practice specifications for ACCESS ROAD (Code 560).
- Spacing of animal trails will be designed to ensure that trail ends (points of destination) are not closer than one-half mile apart.

- Maximum allowable grade is 20 percent, except for short distances where necessary to by-pass dangerous areas or barriers. On granitic soils, slope gradient will not exceed 10 percent.
- Construct water bars, as needed, to turn water off the trail to prevent erosion. Water bars are typically installed within 75-feet of the crest of a trail segment with additional water bars spaced at 75-foot intervals downslope for grades less than 20 percent. Water bars are installed within 50-feet of the crest of steep trail segments with additional water bars spaced at 50-foot intervals downslope for grades exceeding 20 percent. On granitic soils, water bars are spaced at 50-foot intervals irrespective of slope gradient.
- Angle of turns in trail will not exceed 135-degrees. Avoid sharp turns or steep grades that restrict movement and allow animals to bunch up. Bunching damages vegetation and increases the potential for accelerated erosion.
- Stream crossings sites should be selected where stream reaches have a stable bottom and where flows are low and shallow. Crossing sites that have stable, gently sloping, banks are most desirable.
- Culverts will be installed where intermittent or perennial streams are to be crossed.
- Minimum width of bridges, when needed, is 6-feet, excluding side rails. If vehicles will use the bridge, consult a professional engineer.
- Avoid trails in canyon bottoms and washes or draws or through slide areas.
- If trails are seeded to establish vegetative cover for erosion protection, follow practice standards and specifications for CRITICAL AREA PLANTING (Code 342).

Conservation practice specifications are reviewed periodically, and updated if needed. To obtain the current version of this specification, contact the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

IIB. ANIMAL WALKWAYS

The following elements shall govern the construction of animal walkways:

- Walkways will be spaced one-half mile apart when two or more parallel walkways are needed to provide access.
- Space walkways over marsh areas so that flooded areas are no more than one-fourth mile from a walkway or islands of high ground.
- Walkways over marsh or other wet areas are typically no wider than 5 to 10-feet.
- Settled height of walkway embankments will be at least 2-feet above normal high-water levels.
- Where marsh or wet areas are on either side of a walkway, borrow pits are staggered on both sides of the embankment so that access to grazing areas and back to walkway is allowed in either direction. Borrow pits along the side of an embankment are spaced at no more than 660-foot intervals.
- Where a walkway is constructed along a land ownership boundary and fill can be taken from only one side of the embankment, a 30-foot section of undisturbed ground will be left at intervals not to exceed 250-feet.
- Minimum width of bridge, when needed, is 6-feet, excluding side rails. If vehicles will use the bridge, consult a professional engineer.
- Livestock use is not permitted on walkways for one full growing season following construction to allow embankment to settle and stabilize.
- If walkways are seeded to establish vegetative cover for erosion protection, follow practice standards and specifications for CRITICAL AREA PLANTING (Code 342).

III. PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Specifications for applying this practice shall be prepared for each project and recorded as separate plans and designs that are maintained in the land owner/operator case file.

IV. BASIS FOR ACCEPTANCE

After the trail or walkway has been completed, an on-site inspection will be conducted to determine if the practice has been applied to conform with the specifications.

Maintain trail by keeping stones, fallen trees and earth slides, etc., removed from trail.

REFERENCES

USDA Forest Service and USDI. (1987). Facilities for Handling, Sheltering and Trailing Livestock. Publication 2400-Range 8724 2809. Equipment Development Center, Missoula, MT.